COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health

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TO: Each Health Deputy

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. JEfielding mo
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SUBJECT: **AMERICAN BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION FACT SHEET**

It has come to my attention that the attached fact sheet has been provided to at least some of your offices during visits by representatives of the American Beverage Association (ABA). Unfortunately, the fact sheet contains inaccurate and misleading statements regarding sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs).

First, the fact sheet presents a misleading time comparison. The fact sheet indicates that SSB sales and consumption have gone down since 1999 and 2000, respectively, with the implication that SSBs are not driving obesity rates. This statement is not accurate and is directly contradicted by a large body of research.[1, 2] In actuality, the data show that during this period when sales and consumption of SSB decreased, the obesity epidemic actually slowed and in some population groups even leveled off in the United States.[3, 4] Moreover, it was during the 1980's and 1990's, a period when SSB consumption and sales were rapidly increasing throughout the nation, that obesity rates rapidly rose across the nation.[5]

Second, the fact sheet states that "food is the No. 1 source of added sugars, not sugar sweetened beverages." This statement is based on a government study which found that 59% of the added sugar consumed by children and adolescents comes from food, with SSBs accounting for the remaining 41%.[6] However, it is important to note that SSBs have a unique capacity to promote weight gain because their consumption does not trigger the same sense of fullness that occurs with consumption of foods with added sugar.[7]

Third, the fact sheet states that "calories from soda and sugar-sweetened beverages are a small fraction of the American diet." Though this is a true statement, it is important to note that the increase in SSB consumption accounts for a major share of the overall increase in calories consumed by Americans since the 1970's. For example, between 1977 and 2001 daily calorie consumption in the U.S. increased by 250-300 calories, nearly half (43%) of which came from the increased consumption of SSBs.[2]

Though SSB consumption has decreased since 2000, it still remains high. Results of the 2011 Los Angeles County Health survey indicate that 36% of adults (18 and older) and 38% of children in Los Angeles County drink an average of one or more SSBs each day. Even among young children five years and younger, 24% drink one or more SSBs each day.

The obesity epidemic is caused by many factors related both to diet and physical activity. Accordingly, DPH is focusing on a broad range of strategies to improve nutrition, reduce caloric intake, and increase physical activity. Attached is a fact sheet developed by DPH with current data on obesity and SSBs.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please let me know.

JEF:ps

Attachments

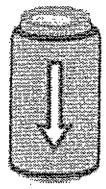
c: Sheila Shima
Richard Mason
Jonathan E. Freedman
Paul Simon, M.D., M.P.H.

References:

[1] Malik VS, Schulze MB, Hu FB. Intake of sugar-sweetened beverages and weight gain: a systematic review. Am J Clin Nutr, 2006.
[2] Woodward-Lopez G, Kao J, Ritchie L. To what extent have sweetened beverages contributed to the obesity epidemic? Public Health Nutr, 2010.
[3] Flegal KM, Carroll MD, Ogden CL, Curtin LR. Prevalence and trends in obesity among US adults, 1999-2008. MAMA, 2010.
[4] Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Kit BK, Flegal KM. Prevalence of obesity and trends in body mass index among children and adolescents, 1999-2010. JAMA, 2012.
[5] Nielsen SJ, Popkin BM. Changes in beverage intake between 1977 and 2001. Am J Prev Med, 2004.
[6] Ervin RB, Kit BK, Carroll MD, Ogden CL. Consumption of added sugar among U.S. children and adolescents, 2005-2008. NCHS data brief, 2012.
[7] Bray GA, Neilsen SJ, Popkin BM. Consumption of high-fructose corn syrup in beverages may play a role in the epidemic of obesity. Am J Clin Nutr 2004.

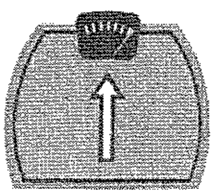
THE **FACTS** ABOUT **SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES** AND **OBESITY**

When data from the federal government and independent third parties is looked at more closely, it shows that calories from sugar-sweetened beverages are declining by multiple measurements. And it shows that sugar-sweetened beverages are already a small part of the American diet. The data puts beverages and obesity into clearer context.



Calories from soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages are declining

Full-calorie soda sales	Down 12.5%	(1999-2010)[1]
Average calories per serving from beverages	Down 23%	(since 1998)[2]
Total beverage calories in schools	Down 88%	(since 2004)[3]
Calories in American diet from added sugars in soda	Down 39%	(since 2000)[4]

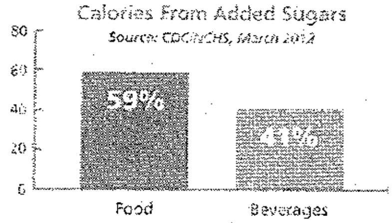


... While obesity is going up

Obesity among children and adolescents aged 2-19	Up 69%	(since 1994)[5]

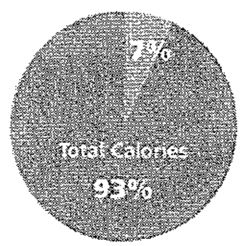
Food is the No. 1 source of added sugars, not sugar-sweetened beverages.

According to data from the CDC, sugar-sweetened beverages **are not** the No. 1 source of added sugars for children and teens, refuting the common assertion by some researchers and activists. The data also show calories from added sugars from soda are **down 39 percent** since 2000.[4]



Calories from soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages are a small fraction of the American diet.

An analysis of government NHANES data included in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines shows that when all sugar-sweetened beverages are combined, they account for only 7% of the average diet.



The Data: Soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages are not driving obesity.

If calories and added sugars consumed from beverages are going down and obesity is going up — how can soda and sugar-sweetened beverages be a unique or significant contributor to obesity? The numbers just don't add up.

[1] Source: Beverage Digest
[2] Source: Beverage Marketing Corporation
[3] Source: Wescott, R. (2010). Alliance school beverage guidelines final progress report. Retrieved from: http://www.ameribev.org/files/240_School%20Beverage%20Guidelines%20Final%20Progress%20Report.pdf
[4] Source: Welsh JA, Sharma AJ, Grellinger L, Vos MB. (2011). Consumption of added sugars is decreasing in the United States. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. doi: 10.3945/ajcn.111.012356
[5] Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; link: http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/data.html

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Obesity and Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption in LA County

- Obesity rates are high in Los Angeles County

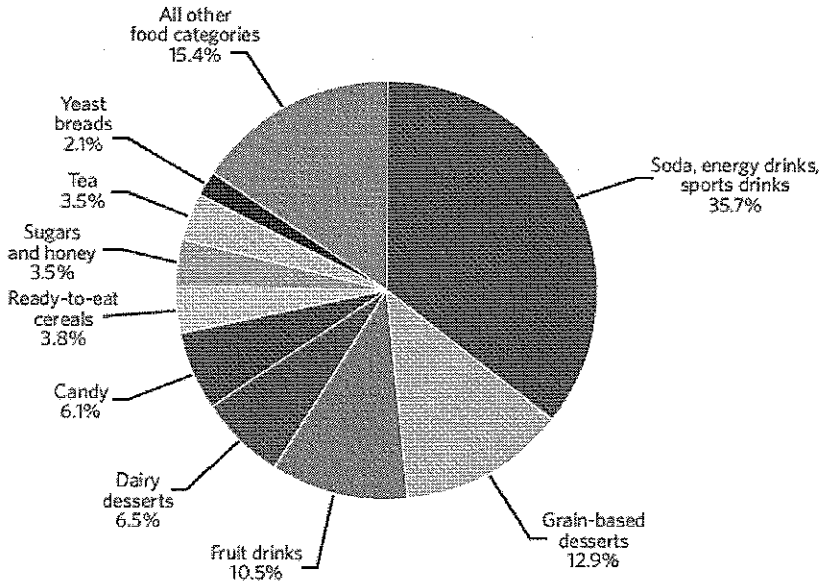
- 24% of adults are obese and 37% are overweight – a combined 61% of the county's adult population.[1]
- 23% of 5th, 7th, and 9th graders in public schools across the county are obese.[2]
- Even among very young children, obesity rates are high – among 3 and 4 year olds receiving services in the WIC supplemental nutrition program, 21% are obese.[3]

- Many adults and children in the county consume sugar-sweetened beverages every day[1]

- 36% of adults drink one or more sugar sweetened beverages each day.
- 38% of children 17 years and younger drink one or more sugar-sweetened beverages each day, including 24% of children 5 years and younger.

- Sugar-sweetened beverages are the major source of added sugar in our diets

Sources of Added Sugars in the Diets of the U.S. Population Ages 2 Years and Older



Source: 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, from 2005-2006 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)

- The evidence linking sugar sweetened beverage consumption and obesity is strong

- Comprehensive reviews of the research literature have found strong evidence that regular consumption of sugar sweetened beverages is an important contributor to weight gain and obesity.[4, 5]

- Because greater consumption of SSBs is associated with weight gain, efforts to limit the consumption of SSBs are an important component of comprehensive public health strategies to reduce the obesity epidemic.[6]

References

[1] 2011 Los Angeles County Health Survey; Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

[2] Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology. Preventing Childhood Obesity: the need to create healthy places. A Cities and Communities Report. October 2007.

[3] Data from Public Health Foundation Enterprise's WIC Program.

[4] Malik VS, Schulze MB, Hu FB. Intake of sugar-sweetened beverages and weight gain: a systematic review. *Am J Clin Nutr,* 2006.

[5] Vartanian LR, Schwartz MB, Brownell KD. Effects of soft drink consumption on nutrition and health: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Am J Public Health 2007;97:667-675.

[6] Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.